

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO
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AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: ISRAELI EFFORTS TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS WITH JORDAN

1. IN A LONG AND THOUGHTFUL ARTICLE IN MAARIV APRIL 7, POLITICAL COMMENTATOR HARIF DISCUSSES THE CURRENT STATE OF ISRAEL'S RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS AND ITS EFFORTS TO CONDUCT PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. AS HE OFTEN DOES IN HIS WEEKLY COLUMN, HE BEGAN WITH A REVIEW OF THE DISCUSSIONS AT THE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING. ON THIS OCCASION, HE NOTED FOR EXAMPLE YADIN'S DEFENSE OF BEGIN("BEST PRIME MINISTER WE COULD HAVE AT THIS TIME") AND THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN USG AND GOI ON WITHDRAWAL AND 242. TO ILLUSTRATE HIS POINT THAT ISRAEL HAS BEEN MORE FLEXIBLE THAN IT IS GIVEN CREDIT FOR, HAIRF REPORTS THAT EFFORTS WERE MADE TO REACH AN UNDERSTANDING WITH JORDAN:

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2. "THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT HAS IN FACT SHOWN GREATER FLEXIBILITY THAN THE PUBLIC IS AWARE OF: LAST OCTOBER, WHEN THERE WAS ALREADY TALK OF A POSSIBLE BEGIN-SADAT MEETING, FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN HELD A MEETING WITH A HIGHRANKING JORDANIAN PERSONAGE. THAT PERSONAGE WAS ASKED WHETHER JORDAN WOULD NOW BE READY FOR A PEACE COMPROMISE, JORDAN'S AUTHORIZED REPLY: ON NO ACCOUNT. THERE IS NOT ONE ARAB LEADER WHO WILL SIGN TO THE 'OCCUPATION'

OF ANY PART (OF ARAB LAND). SO IT WAS THAT JORDAN, TOO,
REPLIED, FOR THE WHO-KNOWS-WHICH-TIME, THAT IT IS NOT READY
FOR A TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE. IT IS DEMANDING EVERYTHING.

3. "THAT WAS AN INTERESTING MOVE BY THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT.
IT CAME BECAUSE THE POLICY-MAKERS WANTED TO EXAMINE, FROM THE
MORAL POINT OF VIEW, TO WHAT EXTENT AN IDEOLOGICAL CONCEPTION
WAS LIABLE TO PREVENT PEACE, SHOULD IT EMERGE THAT THERE EXISTS
A REASONABLE PROSPECT FOR A PEACE SETTLEMENT AT THE PRICE OF
A COMPROMISE. THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT RECEIVED THE SAME REPLY
FROM THAT JORDANIAN PERSONAGE WHICH ALL PREVIOUS ISRAEL
GOVERNMENTS HAD RECEIVED. IT WAS ONLY AFTER THAT REPLY HAD BEEN
RECEIVED THAT THE PEACE PLAN (FOR 'AUTONOMY') WAS DRAWN UP - THIS,
TO OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTY OF THE 'TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE,'
WHICH THE OTHER SIDE, TOO, DOES NOT WANT, AND WHOSE GIST IS TO
LEAVE ASIDE THE QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE WEST BANK,
WHICH IS CLAIMED BY BOTH ISRAEL AND JORDAN. INDEED, IT IS
JORDAN WHICH IS THE OBSTACLE TO PEACE, CERTAINLY, WASHINGTON,
TOO, KNOWS ABOUT THIS CONTACT BETWEEN DAYAN AND THE JORDANIAN
PERSONAGE. AND IF WASHINGTON IS STILL PROPOSING A 'PLEBISCITE,'
IT IS ONLY BECAUSE IT WANTS TO SATISFY THE WILL OF THE ARABS -
BE IT JORDAN, SAUDI ARABIA OR EGYPT - AT ISRAEL'S EXPENSE.
THIS GOVERNMENT, LIKE ITS PREDECESSORS, IS NOT READY TO
GAMBLE WITH ISRAEL'S PHYSICAL SURVIVAL."
LEWIS

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